

Direct Grants to Local Government Archives

Guidelines for 2004-2005 Applications

Grant applications must provide **all** detailed information. Significant omissions will be cause to reject an application.

To give your program the best chance to be considered for a grant:

- read these instructions carefully;
- comply with them fully;
- focus your grant request and justification carefully, specifically, and precisely.

Background. In 1998, the Secretary of State initiated a program to encourage development of local archives. The Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) is the action agency, and the Assistant State Archivist is the action officer for this Archives Development Program.

This program supplements the continuing TSLA program of microfilming permanent records in the counties and municipalities of Tennessee.

Beginning in fiscal year 1999, \$50,000 per year has been made available for some 10-15 program improvement grants to local government archives. We are extremely thankful to the Secretary of State for his commitment to the grants for the current FY 2004-2005.

The amount of funding is too small to subsidize major investments such as reconditioning space or the fees of engineers and architects or staff compensation. The small amount of funding available is most effectively concentrated on things that can get records up off the floor, off wooden shelves, out of acidic containers, cleaned and flattened, and under effective control so that we know where things are and can find them when a member of the public wishes to examine them.

Restoration of bound record books of permanent records also falls into the “rescue mission” criteria; however, the cost per item is high (\$1,200-\$1,800 per volume), and applicants are encouraged to focus the scant funding on projects that will help to salvage and preserve larger quantities of records.

Sixth-round Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures

The current round is for grants to be awarded in fiscal year 2004-2005 (that is in the year beginning 1 July 2004 and ending 30 June 2005).

Although having received a grant in previous years does not automatically eliminate an archives from funding in FY 2004-2005, it is likely to be considered for a grant in FY 2004-2005 for a new proposal only if:

- the new proposal is well within the selection criteria,
- there is an overwhelming case for urgent need, and
- new applicants do not present a stronger case for funding.

Since there is only \$50,000 available, and since there are 95 counties and some 300-odd municipalities in Tennessee, it is impossible to provide grants to all programs that need help. Only those that best meet the grant criteria can be considered seriously for funding. It is likely that no more than twenty (20) grants will be awarded in FY 2004-2005.

The following are provisional policies and procedures for the 2004-2005 round. They will be reviewed and revised for future years as experience may suggest.

1. To be eligible for a grant, a *county* must show that it has an active **public records commission** that includes at least the required statutory members, ex officio and appointed, and the county must certify that the public records commission meets **at least twice a year** as required by law. [See TCA § 10-7-401].¹
2. To be eligible for a grant, a county/municipality must show a clear, existing **budget commitment** and **legislative appropriation** to establish and/or sustain a formal archives and/or records office supervised by a county-appointed archivist or records officer.
3. Archival assistance grant proposals must come from the office of the local government executive or the official designated to administer grants (though they may be prepared by the local government archivist), and grants will be awarded only to the executive or grants administrator for disbursement.
4. A performance contract is required for each grant awarded.
5. Grants are to help local governments with their **own** efforts to build effective archives—**not** a substitute for local resources. To attract support, a local government **must** make and demonstrate a good-faith effort to develop archives out of its own resources.
6. So far as merits of applications permit, TSLA will take reasonable care to distribute grants equitably.
7. Within 12 months of receiving a grant, a grantee **must file a report of how the funds were spent and what resulted to improve the local archives**. Those that fail to do this become ineligible for future grants until the report is filed and accepted². **TSLA will reject grant review reports that fail to justify use of funds**. TSLA may inspect the improvements claimed.
8. Grants will be awarded **only** for the following purposes:
 - 8.1 Procurement of archival supplies, archival equipment, or archival furnishings that directly help to salvage, restore, and preserve endangered permanent records of the county/municipality;

¹ Since municipalities are not required by law to have public records commissions, this requirement does not apply to municipalities. Municipalities must meet all other requirements to be eligible.

² Notwithstanding the 12-month term, above, if a county wishes to apply for a subsequent grant, the expenditure report must be received and accepted by TSLA before the new application will be considered.

8.2 Procurement of supplies and equipment that directly help to achieve and maintain locator and inventory control of permanent records so that they may be readily inspected by the public according to TCA § 10-7-503(a).

9. Grants **will not be awarded for** or to assist with major capital improvements such as land or structure purchases or renovations.

10. Grants **will not be awarded for** the procurement of electronic imaging equipment

- *unless* TSLA is assured in writing that the intended use of that equipment *does not* interfere with or limit the time and attention applied to more traditionally proven archival techniques for conservation, arrangement, and description of original permanent records,
- *unless* TSLA is assured in writing that the imaging process is *not* to be employed as a substitute for archival quality microfilm to large bodies of material; **and**
- *unless* the intended use is *limited to*
 - a specific, well-defined, small body of material for a short-term project, and the materials to be copied are in high demand for wide or frequent public access (as through Internet access), or
 - a substitute for photocopying to satisfy requests for reproduction by inquirers and users of archives, to be accomplished on a demand-basis.³

11. Counties and municipalities that show that they have archivists, records managers, or records officers who have received training from CTAS, MTAS, the Society of Tennessee Archivists, or an archival education program of an accredited institution of higher education have a significant advantage in obtaining grants.

12. Local archives and records management programs most likely to be awarded grants are those that:

- Follow the grant application procedures and meet grant application deadlines;
- Meet and satisfy the guidelines for archives found in Tennessee Archives Management Advisory: *Basic Archives Management Guidelines for Local Archives*;⁴
- Keep public records as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated 10-7;⁵
- Are open to the public and provide convenient public service during reasonable hours;

³ Despite permissive Tennessee law with respect to electronic records, electronic or electro-magnetic formats are not considered proven to be stable and durable enough to assure the survival of permanent records. Despite the advantages in search, retrieval, and dissemination, the cost and difficulty of mounting hundreds of thousands of pages of documents (such as court case records) on limited electronic memory systems is believed to make investment in imaging systems as a substitute for microfilming uneconomical in the long run.

⁴ A copy of *Basic Archives Management Guidelines for Local Archives* may be obtained from our website by clicking [here](#) or by contacting the Archives Development Program at (615) 253-3470.

⁵ Non-government archives and manuscript collection institutions must seek funding from other sources.

- Demonstrate confirmed commitment to develop archives according to Tennessee law, archival standards, and a careful development plan;
- Benefit from an active public records commission that regularly reviews and approves records disposition authorization requests and encourages archives development;
- Demonstrate a clear ability and designated personnel to administer the grant responsibly;
- Need to acquire archival supplies, archival equipment, or archival furnishings to carry out their duties according to archival standards;
- Present a clear and well-focused plan to salvage and preserve endangered permanent public records so that they may be readily available for public examination in accordance with TCA § 10-7-503(a).
- Present realistic cost/funding estimates and budgets under \$5,000 for the grant objective.
- Offer well-focused, specific project proposals that identify specific objects or supplies to be procured, and that concentrate on the preservation, arrangement, and description of permanently valuable official local government records.⁶

⁶ Proposals for dissemination of copies of archival material or for creating such copies for dissemination will be considered only for well-established archives that have substantial arrangement, description, and preservation control of their holdings. Proposals that emphasize the publication, reproduction, or dissemination of previously-published material are not suitable for these grants.